



WC-BEM 2012

# An empirical research on relationship quality of work life and work engagement

Selahattin Kanten<sup>a\*</sup>, Omer Sadullah<sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup>*Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Zeliha Tolunay Higher School Of Applied Technology and Management, Burdur 15000, Turkey*<sup>b</sup>*Istanbul University, School Of Business, Istanbul 34000, Turkey*

---

## Abstract

Literature on Quality of Work Life (QWL) is limited and several studies commonly correlates with some variables but no study on QWL has associated with work engagement. This research investigates the association between quality of work life and work engagement. The objectives of this study are: (a) to investigate and determine relationships between QWL and work engagement; (b) to compare the work engagement of blue collar employees and white collar employees; (c) to compare the QWL perceptions of blue collar employees and white collar employees in a large sized Turkish marble firm toward this topic. In this context, study conducted in a marble factory in Burdur which is one of the greatest export firm of Turkey. Results showed that there was significant relations between dimension of QWL and work engagement. Accordingly; (a) QWL affect work engagement; (b) work engagement level of blue-collar employees differentiates from white-collar employees; (c) blue collar employees' perceptions of QWL differentiates from white collar employees.

© 2012 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Arasli

Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

**Keywords:** Quality of Work Life, Work Engagement

---

## 1. Introduction

Historically, work has been an important part in the life of humanbeings. It has been accepted that work influences individuals' affective states and well-being. Today, quality of work life (QWL) is viewed as an essential dimension of the quality of life. Furthermore, a high QWL is crucial for organizations to attract and retain workers (Boonrod, 2009: 7). When organization offers quality of work life to their employees, it is a good indicator to boosts its image in attracting and retaining employees. This is important as it indicates firms are able to offer appropriate working environment to employees (Noor and Abdullah, 2012: 739). Many factors contribute to QWL which includes adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and social integration in the work organization that enables an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities (Gupta and Sharma, 2011: 80). Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect (Tabassum et. al, 2011: 17; Rose et. al, 2006: 61). Quality of working life is essentially a multidimensional concept and is a way of reasoning about people, work and its organization (Hsu and Kernohan, 2006: 120). Quality of worklife is important to organizational performance and it is an important factor that affects employee motivation at work. (Gupta and Sharma, 2011: 80). Quality of work life

---

\* Selahattin KANTEN. Tel.: +90-248-325-5843

E-mail address: [selahattinkanten@mehmetakif.edu.tr](mailto:selahattinkanten@mehmetakif.edu.tr)

is the employees' mental perception from the physical and psychological desirability in the work place. Quality of work life is related to the welfare of employees at work and it is quite different from the subject of job satisfaction. Domain of quality of work life does not only affect the employees' job satisfaction but it is also influence the lives outside work of employees such as family, leisure and social needs. When the needs of employees at work does not meet, likely they experience a lot of work stress that will have adverse consequences on the welfare of employees and job performance (Emadzadeh et. al, 2012: 438). Most studies focus on the relationship of QWL with some of the variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, turnover intention, labor relations etc. which play a crucial role in determining the overall wellbeing of any industrial organization. However, there are lack of empirical evidence that relationship QWL and employee work engagement. Work engagement is fundamentally a motivational concept that represents the active allocation of personal resources toward the tasks associated with a work role (Christian, et. al, 2011: 91). Recent efforts to improve organizational performance have begun to emphasize positive organizational behavior concepts and positive emotions. Work engagement has emerged as the most prominent positive organizational concept, particularly among organizational consultants (Burke et. al, 2009: 4-5). This research study, therefore, is designed to further knowledge about such issues by examining the correlation between dimension of QWL and work engagement in the marble factories workplace.

## **2. The Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses**

### *2.1. Quality of Work Life and Its Dimensions*

Quality of work life can be defined as the consideration for the exigency and longing of an employee with regards to the working conditions, remuneration, and chances of professional development, work-family role balance, safety and social interactions at workplace and social relativity of employee's own work. QWL is a combination of strategies, procedures and ambience related to a workplace that altogether, enhance and sustain the employee satisfaction by aiming at improving work conditions for the employees of the organizations (Nazir et. al, 2011: 10278). The evolution of QWL began in late 1960s emphasizing the human dimensions of work that was focused on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment (Rose et. al, 2006: 61; Tabassum et. al, 2011: 19). QWL is a concept of behavioral scientist, and the term was first introduced by Davis at the Forty-Third American Assembly on the Changing World of Work at Columbia University's Arden House. The selected participants assembled there concluded in their final remarks that "improving the place, the organization, and the nature of work can lead to better work performance and a better quality of life in the society". Since the phrase was found the method of defining QWL varied and encompassed several different perspectives (Tabassum et. al, 2011: 19). From a review of literature, the most QWL studies preferred the concept of QWL by Walton's definitions (Timossi et. al, 2008: 3; Boonrod, 2009: 8). Walton, proposed eight major conceptual categories relating to QWL as (1) adequate and fair compensation, (2) safe and healthy working conditions, (3) immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, (4) opportunity for continued growth and security, (5) social integration in the work organization, (6) constitutionalism in the work organization, (7) work and total life space and (8) social relevance of work life (Rose et. al, 2006: 62; Gupta and Sharma, 2011: 80; Tabassum et. al, 2011: 19). Walton pointed out that QWL emphasized humanistic values and social responsibilities and suggested the QWL was eight dimensional constructs as shown in Fig. 1 (Boonrod, 2009: 8).

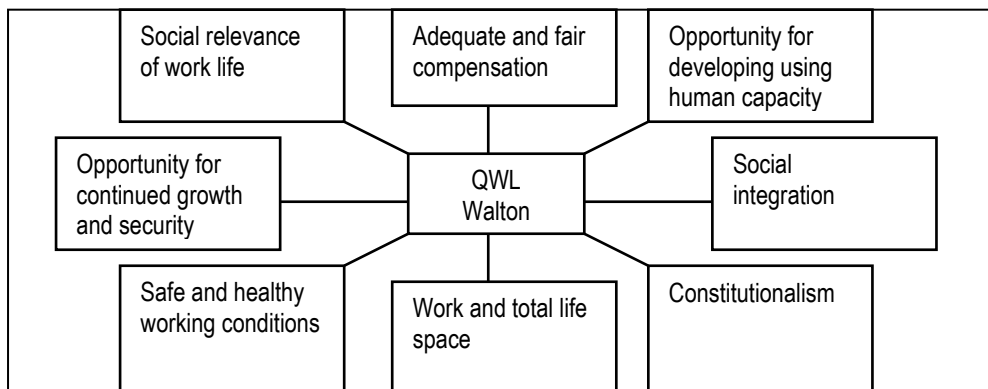


Figure 1. The eight dimensional constructs of Walton's QWL

Walton proposed the conceptual categories of QWL. He suggested eight aspects in which employees perceptions towards their work organizations could determine their QWL. Despite the growing complexity of working life, Walton's eight-part typology of the dimensions of QWL remains a useful analytical tool (Daud, 2010: 76).

## 2.2. Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement was recently introduced to depict the positive impacts of work on the quality of life, alongside with the more negatively loaded concepts of work stress and fatigue (Taipale et. al, 2011: 489). Work engagement has received increasing research attention over the past ten years (Burke et. al, 2009: 5). Work engagement is a broad concept that comprises as core features high involvement, affective energy, and self presence at work (Sonnentag et. al, 2008: 259). Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. In short, engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work. Moreover, they are often fully immersed in their work so that time flies (Shimazu and Schaufeli, 2009: 496; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008: 209-210; ). When employees are engaged with their work, there is congruence between the employees' priorities and the organisations' goals. There are indications that the degree of work engagement is positively associated with job performance (Tomic and Tomic, 2010: 4). According to the job demands-resources model, job resources play a vital role in the development of work engagement, and refer to physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are functional in obtaining work goals, reducing job demands, and providing opportunities for personal growth and learning (Lange et. al, 2008: 202). Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities, and they see themselves as able to deal completely with the demands of their job (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010: 316). Prior literature shows that work engagement has many positive consequences, such as dedication to an organisation better work task performance, initiative and innovative behaviour. Some qualitative studies have stressed the impact of work features such as workload, control, reward, fairness, community and values, on work engagement (Jenaro et. al, 2010: 3). However, although studies have explored causes and effects or inter-industry differences, research on relationship QWL and work engagement varies is lacking. Thus, the study aims (a) to analyse the association between QWL and work engagement; (b) to investigate and compare the work engagement of blue collar employees and white collar employees; (c) to investigate and compare the QWL perceptions of blue collar employees. Therefore we developed three research hypotheses:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of QWL and employees work engagement

H2: Work engagement levels of blue collar employees diffentiates from white collar employees.

H3: Blue collar employees' perceptions of QWL diffentiates from white collar employees.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample and Procedures

This study was conducted at one of the largest Marble firm in Turkey. The sample used for the study consists approximately 180 staff, who served in various positions as blue or white collar workers. From the 180 questionnaires that were sent, 156 (%86) were returned and 138 (%76) were accepted as valid and included in the evaluations.

#### 3.2. Measuring Instrument

Measures used in the questionnaire are adapted from questionnaires used in the studies from literature. The variables used in the QWL measure; are taken from Timossi's et. al. (2008) study. And the variables in the work engagement measure are taken from Salanova's et. al. (2005) study. For answers to the statements of survey, a Likert-type metric, that is, expressions with five intervals has been used. Anchored such; "1- *strongly disagree*, 2- *disagree*, 3- *undecided*, 4- *agree*, 5-*strongly agree*". There are also 6 demographic questions in the questionnaire. As a result of the conducted pilot study, it's observed that the items in the factor analysis, where (n=30) was applied, displayed a proper distribution, in accordance with the theoretical characteristics.

### 4. Research Findings

#### 4.1. Demographical Findings

86% of employees, which participated in the research, are male, and 14% are female. 43% of the employees whose responses were included in the evaluation is under the age 31 while others (57%) more than age 31. 59% of employees completed only primary education; %21 graduated from highshools (Lycée); 10% graduated from vocational scholl and 16% have bachelor degree. 82% of employees are blue collar and 18% are white collar. 45% of employees worked more than five years in this firm.

#### 4.2. Factor and Reliability Analysis

In the study, before performing the relationship analysis between dimensions, the structural validity and reliability levels of measures were tested. First, data of the variables related to QWL were put into factor analysis and the varimax rotation was obtained. In the principal component analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test result (KMO value, 0.881) and the result of Barlett test (1767.532;  $p < 0.01$ ) were significant. As a result of the varimax rotation of the data related to QWL variables, removing the items with factor loadings under 0.40 from the analysis, six factor solutions has been obtained. Emerged factors, explain 72.055% of the total variance. The findings on the resultant factors, factor loadings, explained variances, and internal consistency coefficients calculated for each factor (measure) are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Rotated Factor Loadings with Calculated QWL Measure

<i>Factor 1: Constitutionalism (explained variance = 17.528% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87)</i>	
1. Volarization of the workers' ideas	0.790
2. Freedom of expression	0.759

3. Respect of the workers' rights	0.715
4. Satisfaction of the norms and rules	0.689
5. Respect to the workers' individuality	0.627
<i>Factor 2: Working Conditions (explained variance = 14.229% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.84)</i>	
6. Sufficient technology	0.782
7. Salubrity level	0.729
8. Security equipments and collective protection	0.676
9. Quantity of workload	0.672
<i>Factor 3: Social Relevance and Important of Work (explained variance = 13.803% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87)</i>	
10. Quality of Services and Products	0.821
11. Satisfaction of the company image	0.809
12. Satisfaction of Communitarian integration	0.807
13. Proud of performing work	0.523
<i>Factor 4: Compensation (explained variance = 10.958% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.83)</i>	
14. Satisfaction of Salary	0.847
15. Salary Equality	0.807
16. Recompenses for performance	0.574
<i>Factor 5: Work Occupy (explained variance = 8.113% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.62)</i>	
17. Work Influence on Leisure	0.795
18. Schedule of Work and Rest	0.729
19. Work Influence on Family Life/Routine	0.724
<i>Factor 6: Usage of Capacity and Social Integration (explained variance = 7.425% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.72)</i>	
20. Satisfaction of Work Responsibility	0.573
21. Workers' Commitment to Work	0.543
22. Important Of The Work and Tasks	0.474

After applying factor analysis to the data of work engagement variables, for the principal component analysis, the result of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO value, 0.861) and the Barlett test result (909.283;  $p < 0.01$ ) were found significant. Two factors solution has been achieved as a result of varimax rotated factor analysis. Resultant factors, explain 65.776% of the total variance. The findings on the resultant factors, factor loadings, explained variances, and internal consistency coefficients calculated for each factor are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Rotated Factor Loadings with Calculated Work Engagement Measure

<i>Factor 1: Absorption (explained variance = 33.718% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.84)</i>	
1. I am immersed in my work	0.852
2. Time flies when I'm working	0.825
3. I get carried away when I'm working	0.762
4. It is difficult to detach myself from my job	0.728
5. I feel happy when I am working intensely	0.581
<i>Factor 2: Vigor and Dedication (explained variance = 32.058% ; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89)</i>	
6. In my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0.896
7. At work, I feel full of energy	0.811
8. I can continue working for very long periods at a time	0.787
9. I am enthusiastic about my job	0.640
10. My job inspires me	0.640
11. I am proud of the work I do	0.631

#### 4.3. Findings on the Research Hypotheses

According to correlation analysis findings, “constitutionalism” ( $r=561$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “working Conditions” ( $r=534$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “social relevance and important of work” ( $r=737$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “compensation” ( $r=510$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and “usage of capacity and social integration” dimensions have a significant relation with the “work engagement”. Correlation analysis findings support hypothesis H1. There is a positive relationship between the dimension of QWL and work engagement. However, there is no statistical relationship between “work occupy” and “work engagement”.

Table 3. The Correlation Beetween The Dimension of QWL and Work Engagement

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Means
1. Work Engagement	1							3.46
2. Constitutionalism	.561**	1						3.42
3. Working Conditions	.534**	.607**	1					3.55
4. Social Relevance and Important of Work	.737**	.622**	.612**	1				3.79
5. Compensation	.510**	.610**	.564**	.487**	1			2.77
6. Work Occupy	.052	-.041	-.076	-.032	-.029	1		3.25
7. Usage of Capacity and Social Integration	.581**	.638**	.653**	.637**	.447**	.002	1	3.55

\*\* p&lt;0.001

According to the R square determination coefficient value, given in Table 4; 50% of variance in “work engagement” is explained by “quality of work life”. The regression model, explaining the impact of the QWL on work engagement, is valid (with  $F=138.778$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The positive beta value show that the increase in independent variable leads to an increase in work engagement, or a decrease in independent variables results in a decrease in work engagement. Accordingly; it can be said that QWL affect the work engagement positively.

Table 4. The Regression Analysis For Work Engagement

	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	p
Quality of Work Life	.505	138.778	.711	.000

\*\* p&lt;0.001

According to independent samples t test findings show that work engagement levels of blue collar employees diffentiates from white collar employees. Work engagement levels of white collar employees are higher than blue collars. The other finding is that blue collar employees’ perceptions of QWL diffentiates from white collar employees. White collar employees’ perceptions of QWL are also higher than blue collars. These findings are support hypotheses H2 and H3.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test Summary

	N	Means	t	p
Work Engagement (Blue Collar)	100	3.37	3.774	.000
Work Engagement (White Collar)	21	4.08		
Quality of Work Life (Blue Collar)	100	3.29	3.901	.000
Quality of Work Life (White Collar)	21	3.90		

\*\* p&lt;0.001

Missing (N) = 15

## 5. Conclusion

The findings support research hypotheses and indicate that (1) there is a significant relationship between QWL and employee engagement; (2) blue collar and white collar employee perceived different aspects of their quality of work life; (3) blue collar and white collar employees have different work engagement levels. Even though these findings are specific to the company where this study is conducted we believe that they are still important because they provides an perspective on QWL for marble firms in Turkey. We also believe that this study, according to our knowledge, is the first of its kind to investigate the concept of QWL in marble sector. Recent studies indicate that positive emotions a key factor of organizational performance and commitment. Understanding employees feeling is crucial for human resource management. Because, employee behavior is affected by manegerial practices and



organizational climate. QWL enhance organizational performance and commitment. QWL also facilitates employees to manage their personal life. The results of the present study indicate that the HR specialists in marble firms should improve each factor that affects the QWL; especially associated with blue collar employees. Working conditions of the blue collar employees and QWL activities in marble firms should be investigated in further researches.

## References

- Babcock-Roberson, M.E., & Strickland, O.J., (2010). The Relationship Between Charismatic Leadership, Work Engagement, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors. *The Journal of Psychology*, 144(3), 313–326.
- Bakker, A.B., & Demerouti, E., (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career Development International*, 13(3), 209–223.
- Boonrod, W., (2009). Quality of Working Life: Perceptions of Professional Nurses at Phramongkutklao Hospital. *J Med Assoc Thai*, 92(1), 7–15.
- Burke, R.J., Koyuncu, M., Jing, W., & Fiksenbaum, L., (2009). Work engagement among hotel managers in Beijing, China: potential antecedents and consequences. *Tourism Review*, 64(3), 4–18.
- Christian, M.S., Garza, A.S., & Slaughter, J.E., (2011). Work Engagement: A Quantitative Review And Test of Its Relations With Task And Contextual Performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 89–136.
- Daud, N., (2010). Investigating the Relationship between Quality of Work Life and Organizational Commitment amongst Employees in Malaysian Firms. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(10), 75–82.
- Emadzadeh, M.K., Khorasani, M., & Nematizadeh, F., (2012). Assessing the quality of work life of primary school teachers in Isfahan city. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research In Business*, 3(9), 438–448.
- Gupta, M., & Sharma, P., (2011). Factor Credentials Boosting Quality of Work Life of BSNL Employees In Jammu Region. *Sri Krishna International Research & Educational Consortium*, 2(1), 79–89.
- Hsu, M., & Kernohan, G., (2006). Dimensions of hospital nurses' quality of working life. *Nursing And Healthcare Management And Policy*, 120–131.
- Jenora, C., Flores, N., Orgaz, M.B., & Cruz, M., (2010). Vigour and dedication in nursing professionals: towards a better understanding of work engagement. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 1–11.
- Lange, A.H., Witte, H.D., & Notelaers, G., (2008). Should I stay or should I go? Examining longitudinal relations among job resources and work engagement for stayers versus movers. *Work & Stress*, 22(3), 201–223.
- Nazir, U., Qureshi, T.M., Shafaat, T., & I. A., (2011). Office harassment: A negative influence on quality of work life. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(25), 10276–10285.
- Noor, S.M., & Abdullah, M.A., (2012). Quality Work Life among Factory Workers in Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 35, 739 – 745.
- Rose, R.C., Beh, L., Uli, J., & Idris, K., (2006). Quality Of Work Life: Implications Of Career Dimensions. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 61–67.
- Sakari, T., Kirsikka, S., Timo, A., & Jouko, N., (2011). "Work engagement in eight European countries: The role of job demands, autonomy, and social support. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 31(7/8), 486 – 504.
- Salanova, M., Agut, S., & Peiro, J.M., (2005). Linking Organizational Resources and Work Engagement to Employee Performance and Customer Loyalty: The Mediation of Service Climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1217–1227.
- Shimazu, A., & Schaufeli, W.B., (2009). Is Workaholism Good or Bad for Employee Well-being? The Distinctiveness of Workaholism and Work Engagement among Japanese Employees. *Industrial Health*, 47, 495–502.
- Sonnentag, S., Mojza, E.J., Binnewies, C., & Scholl, A., (2008). Being engaged at work and detached at home: A week-level study on work engagement, psychological detachment, and affect. *Work & Stress*, 22(3), 257–276.
- Tabassum, A., Rahman, T., & Jahan, K., (2011). A Comparative Analysis of Quality of Work Life among the Employees of Local Private and Foreign Commercial Banks in Bangladesh. *World Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 17 – 33.
- Timossi, L.S., Pedroso, B., Francisco, A.C., & Pilatti, L.A., (2008). Evaluation Of Quality Of Work Life: An Adaptation From The Walton's QWL Model. *XIV. International Conference On Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- Tomic, M., & Tomic, E., (2010). Existential fulfilment, workload and work engagement among nurses. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 1–12.